(b) The objective of setting up the Mineral Exploration Fund (MEF) is to promote sustainable activities for exploration and development of minerals other than natural gas, petroleum and atomic minerals.

(c) Yes, Sir. Sources of contribution of the MEF are:

(i) Public Sector Undertakings in Minerals & Metals Sector;

(ii) Institutions and Agencies other than Government; and

(iii) International Aid, either Bilateral or Multilateral.

(d) Question does not arise.

Amendments to the Human Rights Act, 1993

*256 SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY:
SHRI GAYA SINGH:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and Ahmadi Committee have recommended extensive amendments to the Protection of Human Righs Act, 1993 to set right some inadequacies in the law;

(b) if so, the details thereof, separately;

(c) whether Government would bring forward amending legislation to incorporate those modifications; if so, by when; and

(d) if answer to part (c) above be in the negative, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in their Annual Report for the year 1993-94 had recommended certain amendments to the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993. Thereafter, in 1999 the NHRC suggested another amendment in the Act enabling the transfer of the complaints received by the NHRC to the concerned State Human Rights Commission. The Government has not received any recommendation based on the report of the Ahmadi Committee which was constituted by the NHRC.

(b) The Commission suggested, inter alia, certain amendments relating to the definition of human rights autonomy of the Commission, powers relating to inquiries, steps to be taken after

completion of inquiry, functioning of the Human Rights Courts and the role of National Commission vis-a-vis other Commissions/State Commissions.

(c) and (d) On examination of these recommendations, the Government was of the opinion that more experience needed to be gained in the working of the National Human Rights Commission before the actual need for changes are assessed in the carefully worked out provisions of the statute.

Conversion of Wastelands into Agricultural Land

*257. SHRI BARJINDER SINGH HAMDARD:
SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA:

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that land available for agricultural production in the country at present is less, as compared to the wasteland;

(b) if so, the total areas of wasteland and agricultural land, separately, in the country at the end of 1998-99;

(c) whether Government have fixed any time limit to convert these wastelands into agricultural lands; and

(d) if so, the area of land targeted to be converted as agricultural land and by when?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI SUNDAR LAL PATWA): (a) and (b) As per the latest available Land Use Statistics on "Land Use Classification and Irrigated Area", 1996-97 of the Ministry of Agriculture (Directorate of Economics and Statistics), the extent of agricultural land (net area sown) is 142.85 million ha. The extent of barren land & unculturable and other uncultivated land excluding fallow land is 47.65 million ha. As per the report of National Remote Sensing Agency, (NRSA) Hyderabad on Area Statistics of Land Use/Land Cover generated using remote sensing technique on 1:250,000 scale of mapping, the total extent of Wastelands in the country is 75.55 million ha.

(c) and (d) No time limit has been fixed by the Government to convert wastelands into agricultural land. Wastelands are degraded